mentalism in matters where policy and principle conflict. . . ."

Briand and Thomas, the champions of an attack on Germany through Austria, became rank and almost rancorous Westerners when it was proposed to place Italy in the van of the Allied attack for 1917. Thomas and I were great friends. But he lost his temper with me at the Rome Conference when it was suggested that Italy should occupy the front seat in the 1917 campaign.

It was not altogether attributable to the desire of French statesmen that the weight of the Nivelle offensive should not be diminished by the withdrawal of forces to other fronts. Both Briand and Thomas were eloquently insistent on the need for strengthening our forces at Salonika in men and guns, but when the same process was suggested for the Italian Front then nothing could be spared from the Nivelle offensive. It was my first experience of this envious and supercilious attitude of mind on the part of French generals, statesmen and diplomats towards Italy. It was by no means my last. It is largely the explanation and justification of Mussolini's defiant mien and aggressiveness of tone during the first years of his rule. It is fair to say that the French were ready even to alacrity to rush to the aid of Italy when she was beaten by Austria at Caporetto. That was quite in accord with the

historical role of France towards Italy. When, however, it was a question of helping Italy to enter first through the portals of the temple of victory and have the laurel wreath placed first on her brow, that prospect could not be endured by any patriotic